

Re: array verses ArrayList

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"Tom Jones" <tomjones16@hotmail.com> wrote in message
news:uf%23YJBxhEHA.964@TK2MSFTNGP10.phx.gbl...

> *I have a class that contains a collection of reference types. This class*

> *needs to have a method that returns the collection to the caller.*

>

> *The method's signature could be either (it could also be implemented as a*

> *property):*

>

> *MyObject[] GetObjects();*

>

> *or*

>

> *ArrayList GetObjects();*

>

> *The caller can modify the objects that are returned (meaning the caller*

> *should not get a copy of the objects).*

>

> *The size of the collection is never going to change.*

>

> *Is there any reason why I would want to return the objects in an ArrayList*

> *verses a plain array?*

>

If the size cannot change, then no, an Array of MyObject is preferable.

With an ArrayList the user will have to down-cast the objects to use them, which is a small ugly hassle. You could implements a non-resizable MyObjectCollection, but that seems a little silly. Even if you have to do some resizing or array copying, remember that smallish arrays of reference types hava a small memory footprint and are cheap to manipulate since they are really just arrays of pointers.

David